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POPULATION COMMISSION ACTING AS THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 1994
INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON POPULATION
First session
4-8 March 1991
Agenda item 5

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Iftekhar CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)

Chapter III. INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON POPULATION

1. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 4 at its first meeting, on 4 March 1991. The Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for a 1994 international meeting on population (E/1991/5).

2. In her opening statement, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Secretary-General of the 1994 International Meeting on Population said that the convening of such a meeting was timely and appropriate as the international community was endeavouring to achieve a greater balance between population, resources and development. The 1994 Meeting would be unique in many respects, not least in that it would combine technical, policy and operational considerations in an unprecedented manner. She mentioned several international and national declarations and statements, particularly the Amsterdam Declaration, adopted in 1989 by the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, 1/ which had forcefully endorsed the central population issues in the overall development process. The 1994 Meeting would play a fundamental part in helping to promote the actions necessary for sustained and sustainable development.

3. She said that the preparations for the Meeting reflected the notable advances that had been made in the population field, particularly by developing countries in implementing population policies and programmes, as well as the enormous needs and challenges of the future. Those preparations were based on the assumption that the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action and the recommendations for its further implementation remained fully valid and continued to provide a policy framework for population activities at the national, regional and global levels. Some issues remained unresolved, however, and others had emerged recently, among them the need to reinforce previous recommendations that urgently required new action. That was critically important in the context of 20 years of policy and operational experience and the increasing focus on the multifaceted nature of most of the issues faced by countries today.

4. She said that the objectives of the Meeting, as set out by the Economic and Social Council, included an assessment of the progress made and identification of the lessons learned in carrying out national population programmes and in reaching the objectives, goals and recommendations of the Plan of Action. Other objectives were to heighten the level of awareness of population issues on the international agenda; to provide guidance at the global, regional and national levels to ensure that population issues of the highest order were addressed during the next decade; and to adopt a consolidated set of recommendations to guide the implementation of population policies and programmes.

5. She said that the overall theme of the Meeting would be the seriousness, complexity and growing urgency of population issues in the context of the general efforts to pave the way towards sustained and sustainable development in the next decade and to deal with the critical role of population variables in achieving sustainable development. Within that framework, six overarching topics had been proposed: population, environment and development; changing population growth and structures; population redistribution; international migration; women and population; and population policies and programmes.

6. For the Meeting to achieve its important goals, she said, a series of preparatory activities were planned, involving the regional commissions, specialized agencies, other bodies of the United Nations system and other international organizations. The Secretary-General of the 1994 Meeting also pointed out that several regional intergovernmental meetings would be held as part of the preparatory work for the 1994 Meeting. The Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, scheduled for August 1992, was being organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with UNFPA. It was anticipated that other regional population conferences would be convened by the regional commissions in cooperation with UNFPA between mid-1992 and mid-1993 to assess regional experiences and chart specific strategies for the current decade. The results of those conferences would be made available to the Preparatory Committee at its second session, in 1994, and to the International Meeting on Population itself.

7. Several other important activities that would offer valuable information and guidance for the preparation of the documentation for the 1994 Meeting included the review and assessment exercise undertaken by UNFPA, the monitoring of population trends and policies, the Seventh United Nations Population Inquiry among Governments (to be carried out during the biennium 1992-1993), and the results of a wide range of specialized meetings, including those of the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-First Century, held at Amsterdam in November 1989.

8. A small number of expert group meetings had also been planned as part of the preparatory work. The Secretary-General of the 1994 Meeting proposed to explore suitable arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the second session of the Preparatory Committee, as well as in the 1994 Meeting itself.

9. The arrangements proposed for the preparation of the 1994 Meeting had been based on the need for maximum economy, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1989/91. It had been suggested that no separate secretariat be established for the Meeting. Rather, the secretariat would be organized primarily through the redeployment of existing resources of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and UNFPA.

10. In consultation with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, she reported that UNFPA would be responsible for coordination of the overall organizational preparations for the Meeting, including the procurement of financial resources, the preparation of public information and communication activities, the promotion of regional and national preparatory activities and the maintenance of close relationships with national Governments. UNFPA would provide programme-related substanti·e information to help ensure the operational orientation of the meeting. Similarly, in consultation with UNFPA, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs would be responsible for coordinating the substantive aspects of the preparations for the Meeting, including the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action and the formulation of draft recommendations.

Notes

1/ Report of the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 6-9 November 1989 (New York, United Nations Population Fund, 1989).